

**WE CLAIM:**

1. A client terminal connectable to a video distribution system and a display device, the video distribution system provides program guide information to create a program guide that includes program listings and provides program rating data that is associated with rating sources, the client terminal comprising:

a video distribution system interface to receive the program guide information and the program rating data;

a display interface to display the program guide on the display device;

a user interface to receive user input;

a local memory to store a ranking program; and

a terminal controller responsive to the user interface and the ranking program for:

a. allowing the user to select a rating source from a list of rating sources on the display device via user input;

b. ranking program listings based upon program rating data associated with the selected rating source; and

c. displaying the ranked program listings in the program guide on the display device.

2. The client terminal of claim 1, wherein if the rating source selected is a critic rating source that includes program rating data associated with a critic, the program listings are ranked by the selected critic rating source and displayed in the program guide.

3. The client terminal of claim 1, wherein if the rating source selected is a virtual critic rating source that includes program rating data associated with a plurality of critics, the program listings are ranked by the selected virtual critic rating source and displayed in the program guide.

4. The client terminal of claim 1, wherein, if the rating source selected is an aggregated subscriber rating source that includes program rating data based upon the aggregated usage characteristics of other subscribers to the video distribution system, the program listings are ranked by the selected aggregated subscriber rating source and displayed in the program guide.

5. The client terminal of claim 1, further comprising a preference engine.

1 6. The client terminal of claim 5, wherein, the preference engine creates a user profile based  
2 upon a user's viewing patterns.

1 7. The client terminal of claim 6, wherein, if the rating source selected is the user profile,  
2 the terminal controller responsive to the ranking program applies the user profile to the program  
3 guide information of the program guide to create program rating data associated with the user  
4 profile to rank and display the program listings in the program guide.

1 8. The client terminal of claim 6, wherein, the preference engine creates an aggregated user  
2 profile based upon a plurality of user profiles for a plurality of users, each user profile being  
3 based upon each user's viewing patterns.

1 9. The client terminal of claim 8, wherein if the rating source selected is the aggregated user  
2 profile, the terminal controller responsive to the ranking program applies the aggregated user  
3 profile to the program guide information of the program guide to create program rating data  
4 associated with the aggregated user profile to rank and display the program listings in the  
5 program guide.

1 10. The client terminal of claim 6, wherein, the preference engine creates a critic profile  
2 based upon program rating data associated with a critic from a critic rating source.

1 11. The client terminal of claim 10, wherein if the program rating source selected is a critic  
2 profile, the terminal controller responsive to the ranking program applies the critic profile to the  
3 program guide information of the program guide to create program rating data associated with  
4 the critic profile to rank and display the program listings in the program guide.

1 12. The client terminal of claim 6, wherein, the preference engine creates a virtual critic  
2 profile based upon program rating data associated with a plurality of critics from a critic rating  
3 source.

1 13. The client terminal of claim 12, wherein if the program rating source selected is a virtual  
2 critic profile, the terminal controller responsive to the ranking program applies the virtual critic  
3 profile to the program guide information of the program guide to create program rating data

4 associated with the virtual critic profile to rank and display the program listings in the program  
5 guide.

1 14. The client terminal of claim 1, wherein, the client terminal is coupled to the video  
2 distribution system by a link that provides a persistent connection.

1 15. The client terminal of claim 1, wherein, if the rating source selected is a user profile, the  
2 client terminal receives program rating data associated with the selected user profile from the  
3 video distribution system, the terminal controller responsive to the ranking program to rank and  
4 display the program listings in the program guide.

1 16. The client terminal of claim 1, wherein, if the rating source selected is an aggregated user  
2 profile based upon a plurality of user profiles for a plurality of users, each user profile being  
3 based upon each user's viewing patterns, the client terminal receives program rating data  
4 associated with the aggregated user profile from the video distribution system, the terminal  
5 controller responsive to the ranking program to rank and display the program listings in the  
6 program guide.

1 17. The client terminal of claim 1, wherein, if the rating source selected is a critic profile, the  
2 client terminal receives program rating data associated with the selected critic profile from the  
3 video distribution system, the terminal controller responsive to the ranking program to rank and  
4 display the program listings in the program guide.

1 18. The client terminal of claim 1, wherein, if the rating source selected is a virtual critic  
2 profile, the client terminal receives program rating data associated with the selected virtual critic  
3 profile from the video distribution system, the terminal controller responsive to the ranking  
4 program to rank and display the program listings in the program guide.

1 19. A computer program embodied in a computer readable storage medium for use in a client  
2 terminal connectable to a video distribution system and a display device, the video distribution  
3 system provides program guide information to create a program guide that includes program  
4 listings and provides program rating data that is associated with rating sources, the computer  
5 program comprising code segments for:

- 6 a. allowing the user to select a rating source from a list of rating sources on the  
7 display device via user input;
- 8 b. ranking program listings based upon program rating data associated with the  
9 selected rating source; and
- 10 c. displaying the ranked program listings in the program guide on the display  
11 device.

1 20. The computer program of claim 19, further comprising code segments for:

- 2 a. allowing the user to select a critic rating source that includes program rating  
3 data associated with a critic;
- 4 b. ranking the program listings; and
- 5 c. displaying the program listings in the program guide.

1 21. The computer program of claim 19, further comprising code segments for:

- 2 a. allowing the user to select a virtual critic rating source that includes program  
3 rating data associated with a plurality of critics;
- 4 b. ranking the program listings; and
- 5 c. displaying the program listings in the program guide.

1 22. The computer program of claim 19, further comprising code segments for:

- 2 a. allowing the user to select an aggregated subscriber rating source 162 that  
3 includes program rating data based upon the aggregated usage characteristics of other  
4 subscribers to the video distribution system;
- 5 b. ranking the program listings; and
- 6 c. displaying the program listings in the program guide.

1 23. The computer program of claim 19, further comprising code segments for a preference  
2 engine.

1 24. The computer program of claim 23, wherein, the preference engine creates a user profile  
2 based upon a user's viewing patterns.

1 25. The computer program of claim 24, further comprising code segments for:

- 2 a. allowing the user to select the user profile as a rating source;
- 3 b. applying the user profile to the program guide information of the program
- 4 guide to create program rating data associated with the user profile;
- 5 c. ranking the program listings; and
- 6 d. displaying the program listings in the program guide.

1 26. The computer program of claim 23, wherein, the preference engine creates an aggregated  
2 user profile based upon a plurality of user profiles for a plurality of users, each user profile being  
3 based upon each user's viewing patterns.

1 27. The computer program of claim 26, further comprising code segments for:

- 2 a. allowing the user to select the aggregated user profile as a rating source;
- 3 b. applying the aggregated user profile to the program guide information of the
- 4 program guide to create program rating data associated with the aggregated user profile;
- 5 c. ranking the program listings; and
- 6 d. displaying the program listings in the program guide.

1 28. The computer program of claim 23, wherein, the preference engine creates a critic profile  
2 based upon program rating data associated with a critic from a critic rating source.

1 29. The computer program of claim 28, further comprising code segments for:

- 2 a. allowing the user to select the critic profile as a rating source;
- 3 b. applying the critic profile to the program guide information of the program
- 4 guide to create program rating data associated with the critic profile;
- 5 c. ranking the program listings; and
- 6 d. displaying the program listings in the program guide.

1 30. The computer program of claim 23, wherein, the preference engine creates a virtual critic  
2 profile based upon program rating data associated with a plurality of critics from a critic rating  
3 source.

1 31. The computer program of claim 30, further comprising code segments for:

- 2 a. allowing the user to select the virtual critic profile as a rating source;
- 3 b. applying the virtual critic profile to the program guide information of the
- 4 program guide to create program rating data associated with the virtual critic profile;
- 5 c. ranking the program listings; and
- 6 d. displaying the program listings in the program guide.

1 32. The computer program of claim 19, wherein, the client terminal is coupled to the video  
2 distribution system by a link that provides a persistent connection.

1 33. The computer program of claim 19, wherein, if the rating source selected is a user profile,  
2 further comprising code segments for:

- 3 a. receiving program rating data associated with the selected user profile from the
- 4 video distribution system;
- 5 b. ranking the program listings; and
- 6 c. displaying the program listings in the program guide.

1 34. The computer program of claim 19, wherein, if the rating source selected is an aggregated  
2 user profile based upon a plurality of user profiles for a plurality of users, each user profile being  
3 based upon each user's viewing patterns, further comprising code segments for:

- 4 a. receiving program rating data associated with the aggregated user profile from
- 5 the video distribution system;
- 6 b. ranking the program listings; and
- 7 c. displaying the program listings in the program guide.

1 35. The computer program of claim 19, wherein, if the rating source selected is a critic  
2 profile, further comprising code segments for:

- 3 a. receiving program rating data associated with the critic profile from the video
- 4 distribution system;

- b. ranking the program listings; and
- c. displaying the program listings in the program guide.

36. The computer program of claim 19, wherein, if the rating source selected is a virtual critic profile, further comprising code segments for:

- a. receiving program rating data associated with the virtual critic profile from the video distribution system;
- b. ranking the program listings; and
- c. displaying the program listings in the program guide.

36. The computer program of claim 19, wherein, if the rating source selected is a virtual critic profile, further comprising code segments for:

1 37. A method for presenting ranked program listings in a program guide based upon a  
2 selected rating source, the method comprising the steps of:  
3 a. allowing a user to select a rating source from a list of rating sources displayed on  
4 a display device via user input;  
5 b. ranking program listings based upon program rating data associated with the  
6 selected rating source; and  
7 c. displaying the ranked program listings in the program guide on the display  
8 device.

1 38. The method of claim 37, further comprising the steps of:  
2 a. allowing the user to select a critic rating source that includes program rating  
3 data associated with a critic;  
4 b. ranking the program listings; and  
5 c. displaying the program listings in the program guide.

1 39. The method of claim 37, further comprising the steps of:  
2 a. allowing the user to select a virtual critic rating source that includes program  
3 rating data associated with a plurality of critics;  
4 b. ranking the program listings; and  
5 c. displaying the program listings in the program guide.

1 40. The method of claim 37, further comprising the steps of:  
2 a. allowing the user to select an aggregated subscriber rating source that includes  
3 program rating data based upon the aggregated usage characteristics of other subscribers  
4 to the video distribution system;  
5 b. ranking the program listings; and  
6 c. displaying the program listings in the program guide.

1 41. The method of claim 37, further comprising the step of creating a user profile based upon  
2 a user's viewing patterns.

1 42. The method of claim 41, further comprising the steps of:  
2 a. allowing the user to select the user profile as a rating source;



- b. applying the user profile to the program guide information of the program guide to create program rating data associated with the user profile;
- c. ranking the program listings; and
- d. displaying the program listings in the program guide.

43. The method of claim 37, further comprising the step of creating an aggregated user profile based upon a plurality of user profiles for a plurality of users, each user profile being based upon each user's viewing patterns.

44. The method of claim 43, further comprising the steps of:

- a. allowing the user to select the aggregated user profile as a rating source;
- b. applying the aggregated user profile to the program guide information of the program guide to create program rating data associated with the aggregated user profile;
- c. ranking the program listings; and
- d. displaying the program listings in the program guide.

45. The method of claim 37, further comprising the step of creating a critic profile based upon a critic's preferences derived from program rating data associated with a critic from a critic rating source.

46. The method of claim 45, further comprising the steps of:

- a. allowing the user to select the critic profile as a rating source;
- b. applying the critic profile to the program guide information of the program guide to create program rating data associated with the critic profile;
- c. ranking the program listings; and
- d. displaying the program listings in the program guide.

47. The method of claim 37, further comprising the step of creating a virtual critic profile based upon a plurality of critics' preferences derived from program rating data associated with a plurality of critics from a critic rating source.

48. The method of claim 47, further comprising the steps of:

- a. allowing the user to select the virtual critic profile as a rating source;

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49. A video distribution system connectable to a client terminal that is in turn connected to a display device, the video distribution system provides program guide information to create a program guide that includes program listings displayable on the display device and a list of rating sources also displayable on the display device, the video distribution system comprising:

a video distribution system controller;

memory to store a ranking program and rating sources;

wherein, in response to user input selecting a rating source from the list of rating sources received from the client terminal, the video distribution system controller responsive to the ranking program:

a. ranks program listings based upon program rating data associated with the selected rating source; and

b. commands the client terminal to display the ranked program listings in the program guide on the display device.

50. The video distribution system of claim 49, wherein if the rating source selected is a critic rating source that includes program rating data associated with a critic, the program listings are ranked by the selected critic rating source and displayed in the program guide.

51. The video distribution system of claim 49, wherein if the rating source selected is a virtual critic rating source that includes program rating data associated with a plurality of critics, the program listings are ranked by the selected virtual critic rating source and displayed in the program guide.

52. The video distribution system of claim 49, wherein, if the rating source selected is an aggregated subscriber rating source that includes program rating data based upon the aggregated usage characteristics of other subscribers to the video distribution system, the program listings are ranked by the selected aggregated subscriber rating source and displayed in the program guide.

53. The video distribution system of claim 49, further comprising a preference engine.

54. The video distribution system of claim 53, wherein, the preference engine creates a user profile based upon a user's viewing patterns.

1 55. The video distribution system of claim 54, wherein, if the rating source selected is the  
2 user profile, the video distribution system controller responsive to the ranking program applies  
3 the user profile to the program guide information to create program rating data associated with  
4 the user profile to rank and display the program listings in the program guide.

1 56. The video distribution system of claim 53, wherein, the preference engine creates an  
2 aggregated user profile based upon a plurality of user profiles for a plurality of users, each user  
3 profile being based upon each user's viewing patterns.

1 57. The video distribution system of claim 56, wherein if the rating source selected is the  
2 aggregated user profile, the video distribution system controller responsive to the ranking  
3 program applies the aggregated user profile to the program guide information to create program  
4 rating data associated with the aggregated user profile to rank and display the program listings in  
5 the program guide.

1 58. The video distribution system of claim 53, wherein, the preference engine creates a critic  
2 profile based upon program rating data associated with a critic from a critic rating source.

1 59. The video distribution system of claim 58, wherein if the program rating source selected  
2 is a critic profile, the video distribution system controller responsive to the ranking program  
3 applies the critic profile to the program guide information to create program rating data  
4 associated with the critic profile to rank and display the program listings in the program guide.

1 60. The video distribution system of claim 53, wherein, the preference engine creates a  
2 virtual critic profile based upon program rating data associated with a plurality of critics from a  
3 critic rating source.

1 61. The video distribution system of claim 60, wherein if the program rating source selected  
2 is a virtual critic profile, the video distribution system controller responsive to the ranking  
3 program applies the virtual critic profile to the program guide information to create program  
4 rating data associated with the virtual critic profile to rank and display the program listings in the  
5 program guide.